The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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CHRISTIANITY AND LABOR

TWO THOUSAND years ago, in the light of Christian Revelation, man was first seen clearly as a free intellectual and moral agent, the master of his destiny and responsible for human conditions and the course of human events. Two thousand years ago was set up among the nations of the world a Christian norm or standard of human conduct. Any worth while discussion of contemporary problems must necessarily take into consideration, first, the essential nature of man, and secondly, the objective Christian moral standard by which we can properly either praise or blame the morally responsible actions and activities of individuals and groups of individuals.

There can be no solution of contemporary problems if man is regarded as an automaton, a commodity, a machine, the helpless victim either of his environment or of some inexorable and inevitable cosmic evolutionary process that carries him forward to a destiny which he is altogether powerless to resist or reject. There can be no real solution if it be asserted that all things are relative and hence that we do not know and cannot know, in any given set of circumstances, what is right and what is wrong. There can be no true solution if we continue to render only lip-service to Christianity while abuses pile up and injustices cry to heaven for vengeance.

Seven Bishops of the Province of San Antonio recently issued a joint pastoral letter in which they asserted that the tragedy of this age is that vast portions of mankind have no access to the benefits of the age's enlightenment or to the results of its discoveries. The result has been that we see everywhere about us the cruel and unnecessary paradox of dire and abject poverty rubbing elbows with haughty opulence.

What is the Christian solution to our problems?

Our problems today are mostly moral problems. Hence the amelioration of our social ills

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must be sought for in the moral reformation and spiritual quickening of society as a whole. But the reformation of society depends, in the last analysis, upon the reformation of the individual—through personal sanctification, through the assiduous performance of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. It is our duty to put Christianity into practice in our own daily lives and to bear the truth which we possess to those who are innocent of it. We must carry the glad tidings of Christianity to the tenements of the poor and to the mansions of the rich.

Underlying this Christian idea of service is likewise the conviction that every human being has not only a claim in charity, but a right founded in strict justice, to as much of the wealth of the community as is necessary to sustain his life. Since this right exists, society is bound to recognize it by giving aid to the poor and indigent by private charity and only then out of public funds if private citizens are either unwilling or unable to succor those in want.

The Bishops point out that the promptings of enlightened Christian conscience tells the individual possessor of worldly goods that he is not the absolute owner, but the steward of his wealth, and that he must use the superfluities of his fortune to aid the deserving poor. This is a moral obligation—not a mere matter of supererogation.

The needed amelioration of the condition of labor must be sought for along the lines of justice and charity. Capital and labor are each necessary to the other. Since both capitalist and workman are human beings, their reciprocal rights and duties must be appraised in the light of moral principles.

Every human being has a natural and basic right to a portion of earthly goods sufficient to sustain life and to assure him normal and reasonable living conditions. Since this right is more easily and reasonably exercised through private ownership than under a system of community holdings, the right to private possessions is likewise a natural and basic, but secondary, right.

"In giving man the earth to be his sustenance," the Bishops assert, "the Creator laid upon him the obligation of working in order to make it produce the things necessary to satisfy human needs. It is a law of nature, then, that man must work in order to live; hence, there is a natural right to work, and labor is a duty incumbent upon all. Although the earth was meant for the sustenance of all, circumstances being what they are, all have not equal access to the earth or its products. In consequence, the man without possessions has only his toil whereby he may lay claim to a portion of nature's bounties sufficient to sustain himself. His need of such portion is fundamental, and, as such, more compelling than the secondary need upon which rests the right to private ownership. It follows, then, that those who possess property have a strict obligation to give those without property access to the earth's bounty by affording them an opportunity to work. In other words, the possessors of wealth have an opportunity to furnish employment as supplying an indispensable social need."

The employer must give the workman, as a just price for his toil, a wage sufficient to enable him to maintain himself and his family in becoming and frugal comfort according to the decent standards of living prevailing in the community in which he lives. Furthermore, the worker should be permitted a share in the profits which he has helped to create. In return, the worker is morally bound to give an honest and efficient day's work.

Labor has a right to organize—a right to form and maintain the particular kind of labor organization necessary to secure its lawful and legitimate demands and the kind which will most effectively secure the welfare of the workers. In any given labor dispute, both capital and labor should bear in mind that the rights of the public as a whole have a prior claim that should be respected by both contending groups.

The crying need of our day is not more legislation, but more Christianity—the active zealous practice of Christian principles among all classes of society and the rapid dissemination of the Christian Gospel of love and brotherhood among those who are as yet unfamiliar with the great truths that are the foundation stones of our civilization.

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, in signing the compromise court bill designed to expedite procedure in the lower courts and assure speedier adjudication of the acts of Congress involving Constitutional issues, served notice to the nation that he would continue to fight for "a thoroughgoing reformation of our judicial processes." Senator King promptly declared that the Federal judiciary is adequate to meet the needs of the people. But what are the facts? It is reliably reported that a Senate committee will undertake a new study of our judicial system. We are of the opinion that this is a common-sense method of procedure. When a thorough survey has been made, we will then be in a position to pass judgment upon the issue. In a larger sense, however, we are convinced that the ideals of social justice are not served by ill-advised and ill-conceived legislation, formulated by some anonymous wild-eyed theorist, and jammed through Congress with only the most perfunctory kind of consideration. This would seem to be

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the appropriate time for a thorough investigation and research into all the aspects of such controversial measures as the wages and hours bill, crop control and unemployment relief. During the next few months Mr. Roosevelt must reach rather definite conclusions regarding the liberal-conservative split in his own party. Will there be reprisals? Will there be a party purge? Will Mr. Roosevelt go on tour to rally popular support behind those bills which the administration deems imperative for the social and economic welfare of all classes? The President has not as yet made up his mind on these grave matters. Congressmen, we may assume, are learning things from the folks back home about all national issues. By the time the next Congress convenes, the issues may be much more clear-cut than they are today.

Aggression and Neutrality

IN A RECENT statement to the League of Nations, the Chinese government asserts that Japan is guilty of aggression pure and simple, that China is exercising her natural right of self-defense, that Japan's present action in China is a continuation of her aggressive program started in Manchuria in September, 1931, and that Japan has violated the League Covenant, the Kellogg-Briand pact and the Nine-power treaty. Few observers dispute these contentions. Senator Vandenberg, however, insists upon firm and complete neutrality for the protection of the United States. Addressing the Veterans of Foreign Wars, he expressed no sympathty for the argument that the Neutrality Act, if immediately applied in China and Japan, would tend to help one belligerent and hurt the other. "It is none of our business, as neutrals," he declared, "what the effect of our neutrality will be upon anybody but ourselves." If Japan has many advantages over China, it would be unneutral, in his opinion, for us to seek to offset Japan's advantages by our treatment of the belligerents. He contends that it is not our duty to equalize the effetc of our neutrality program as between China and Japan. That would be equivalent, he insists, to direct participation in the belligerent equation. We believe Senator Vandenberg has expressed an extreme position which will not be approved by the great mass of our citizens. We do not wish to become embroiled in the Far Eastern conflict. But why should we declare a state of war exists when the two belligerents have not formally declared war? Why antagonize both China and Japan? Why should our short-sightedness in adopting the Neutrality Act be used now as a weapon to penalize the innocent party? It would appear that since the Act is now generally regarded as a dead letter, something should be done in the way of revising and clarifying our somewhat muddled foreign policy.

Spanish Bishops

THE COMPLETE text of the pastoral letter of the Spanish hierarchy concerning the civil war has just been received in this country. It is a remarkable document. We deeply regret that severe limitations of space prevent us from quoting extensively from it. The Bishops state that the Church neither wished for the war, nor provoked it, nor conspired for it. In the very nature of things, however, it could not be indifferent to the struggle. From the very beginning, one of the belligerent parties aimed directly at the abolition of Christianity. The war was occasioned by the rashness, the mistakes, perhaps the malice and cowardice of those who could have avoided it by governing the nation with justice. It has been documentally proved that the scrupulously prepared scheme of the Marxist Revolution would have broken out in the whole country were it not for the fact that, in great part, it was hindered by a national movement for the defense of the fundamental principles of every civilized society. There is no hope in Spain for the reconquering of justice and peace, and the blessings that derive from them, other than the triumph of the Nationalist cause. The Bishops trust in the prudence of Nationalist leaders that, at the end of the struggle, they will not accept foreign models for the structure of the future of the Spanish State, "but that they will consider the requirements of the national life from within, and the course marked by past centuries." The Bishops, in conclusion, ask that, to our pity for the Spanish people in this tragic hour, there be added the charity of our prayers; and to that, so as to complete our work, the charity of truth about the things of Spain.

Andrew Mellon

ANDREW MELLON spent many years of his life in high government office, but he was known primarily as a rich man. He escaped none of the burdens which wealth, with scriptural precision, places on the shoulders of men. Since 1930 he had given away "considerably" more than $70,000,000. Now, at his death, the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust receives several more hundreds of millions. In whatever spirit he gave, none of his gifts has ever been accepted by the public generously. Indeed, the public has almost made Andrew Mellon, fabulously rich, excessively powerful and astoundingly successful in the jobs he set about, in the end, a tragic figure. When a public figure is to be judged, he should not be judged personally. We can only consider as well as possible the public acts a public man is closely associated with, and judge, in sum, if we approve or disapprove the apparent effects of those acts. The generosity of Mellon is something for everyone to rejoice about,

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for everyone to greet with thanks and pleasure. In the acquisition of his wealth and power Mr. Mellon was identified with a tide in American history which we regret and which we hope will turn forver. In all, we hope there will be no more Americans with the monstrous business possessions of a Mellon or a Rockefeller, but we sincerely hope that the country may produce yet more men who will give, in proportion to what they have, with such benefit to the whole community.

The City's Traffic

NEW YORKERS have known, ever since they have had a traffic problem, that its solution depended not only on having the traffic laws rigidly enforced, but also on having the right traffic laws to enforce. The effort to formulate such laws has cost the city a good deal, but it begins to be clear that the results will turn out to be more and more worth it. One focus of the problem is the matter of safety—consciousness on the part of both drivers and pedestrians. The other focus is the matter of sheer congestion. In regard to the first, the city has made marked progress in recent times—so marked, indeed, that it has been among the leaders of the nation. In regard to the second, any notice of improvement must of course be prefaced by the admission that it is in itself insoluble. Whatever we do, there will always be too many people walking and driving on our streets. However, the engineering technique necessary to cope with this, if not to solve it, is being steadily developed. The first half-yearly report on the new traffic code, just made public, shows this in the material decrease in accidents and deaths over the same period for 1936. The West Side highway is partly responsible, leading one to hope, with the police, that the East Side highway will soon be completed. The ban on red light turns has evidently also had a large share in this heartening result, thus abundantly justifying itself against the irritation of motorists.

Religious Press

IN HIS address at the Institute of Human Relations, recently held at Williams College under the auspices of the National Conference of Jews and Christians, the Reverend John La Farge, S. J., cited a number of important problems upon which the entire religious press in the United States should be able to agree. The inroads of paganism in the field of education, the ruling of God's name out of public life, the increasing indifference to moral standards in married life, the increased irresponsibility of parents, the apathy of the vast body of our citizenry to reckless public expenditures, the divorce from the land, the growth of racial and sectional prejudice, and the distrust on the part of labor and capital alike of a religious or spiritual solution of their mutual differences—all of these immensely important problems have merited, and will continue to receive, the most careful attention of all journalists—Protestant, Catholic and Jew—who are profoundly convinced that a return to God and a belief in the metaphysical order are indispensable prerequisites to the maintenance and preservation of contemporary society. Father La Farge pointed out that, because the influence of the religious press is so real, because it is the most genuinely independent and socially unregimented organ of expression which our country possesses, "we wish and plan to extend its influence." All the members of THE COMMONWEAL staff share this wholesome and happy ambition. We realize to the utmost that success depends, in part, upon our accurate and fearless presentation and interpretation of national and international events and, in part, upon the support and encouragement which we receive from all our friends and subscribers. We express the sincere hope that this partnership, so fruitful in the past, may be productive of even greater accomplishments in the months and years to come.

Interlude

JUSTICE, of course, is always reverend, and never descends to the wearing of motley. But those with whom Justice must deal —"humans, warious," as Mr. Venus would say—are a different story. For instance, in the *cause célèbre* of La Verne Moore, now before the public, the Wilde aphorism that life often copies art certainly collides with the Chestertonian maxim that art often dares not copy life. This alleged hold-up man fled to Hollywood several years ago, and not only turned into a reformed character there but turned fashionable and even in a way celebrated. For he was possessed of more than the engaging qualities which attached him to many of the Solider citizens of the movie world. He was something of a prodigy as a golfer. A few months ago he beat Bing Crosby on a special bet, with garden implements for sticks. Little did he reck that the alert officials in charge of the case, for all the world like fiction detectives, had been watching the newspapers for years for just such a story. Identified and brought back to New York state, scene of the crime, he is now out on a large bail (furnished by Hollywood), and has been commended by the judge as a "modern Jean Valjean." In deprecating some of the loyal but misguided remarks of the prisoner's friends, especially one—"a former heavyweight champion and alleged Shakespearean scholar"—his honor also quoted "Hamlet" with especial neatness. We have always known that Gilbert died too soon.

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LABOR DAY—1937

By GEORGE K. McCABE

THE PROGRESS of labor in the past year has been marred by the continuation of unemployment on a large scale. According to the conservative National Industrial Conference Board, the number employed rose by three millions from May, 1936, to May, 1937. This leaves from six to seven millions out of work. The American Federation of Labor estimates the unemployed at more than ten millions. Because most of those without work are in the unskilled class, they do not interfere with the strikes of the semi-skilled or skilled workmen.

The principal strikes during the year were the maritime strike on the Pacific coast, the strike in the General Motors and Chrysler plants, and the attempt at suspension of work in the "independent" steel companies' plants. The marine strike on the Atlantic coast, an unauthorized or outlaw strike, was a failure from the beginning. The shipping companies refused to deal with the insurgent leader, Mr. Curran, and service was continued by a majority of the unionists in conformity with their contract. Finally, at the end of January, 1937, the three months strike was called off by vote of the Atlantic and Gulf coast locals. By contrast, the almost complete suspension of shipping on the Pacific coast continued from October 31, 1936, to February 4, 1937. By that date the differences of seven of the ten unions involved had been composed. After a few days of delay and some further interference on the part of three recalcitrant unions, a complete settlement was effected. The multiplicity of unions and the ability of one dissident group to hold up the settlement pointed to the advantage of the industrial type of organization. Indeed, the A. F. of L., with which these groups are affiliated, is setting up a marine department to coordinate union activity against the efforts of the C.I.O. in this field. The fruits of victory were substantial, although obtained at a $500,000,000 cost. The settlement stipulated payment of cash for overtime instead of time off to balance, an eight-hour day, preferential hiring, union recognition, and wage increases of $10 per month. This is another evidence of the prevailing tendency to bring wage rates for the semi-skilled closer to those paid skilled labor; the chief steward received the same dollar increase as the mess boy. The revision of wage rates in the steel industry was in the same direction.

The automobile strike of January, 1937, was caused by the transfer, it is alleged, of those active in unionization to sections of the factories where the work was running low and dismissal most likely. Another complaint was based on the small voice which the union had in matters of plant management. The management, in effect, told the automobile workers' union that it had no intention of bargaining collectively and that full discretion was reserved regarding every-day working matters. The union set about to organize the General Motors employees to settle the discrimination question by a closed shop and to get the authority to deal directly with the General Motors executives instead of being summarily treated by the plant managers.

After the triumphs at the General Motors, Chrysler and Hudson plants, the C.I.O. turned to the independent steel companies, the U. S. Steel Corporation having signed up without a fight. Whether from overconfidence or lack of plan, the steel strike in the "independent" steel companies was badly "muffed." The masterful stroke in handling the U. S. Steel Corporation and the careful planning demonstrated in the General Motors strike is in sharp contrast to the amateurish tactics used at Youngstown, South Chicago and Cleveland. In Chicago, mass picketing degenerated into a mob demonstration that so frightened the police that they fired in a panic, and left six dead and fifty wounded. So too did the leaders fall into the trap set by Mr. Girdler in the interruption of the parcel post service in Warren. Again, the Monroe incident, the threatening of a small community by a union-led mob, the proposed march on Johnstown by the 40,000 United Mine Workers, all these betoken overconfidence, or desperation. In extenuation, these incidents must be looked upon as the mark of adolescence of the rejuvenated unionization movement not unlike and no worse than the untoward episodes that marked the rise of representative government. At any rate, the strike proved in general a costly failure. The rapid development of hostile public opinion was immediately reflected in the stern attitude of the governors of Ohio and Pennsylvania. So sure were the employers by this time that they refused to deal with the union leaders at the request of the federal mediation board.

The episode brings out clearly some new developments in industrial strife: public opinion forms much faster than ever before, therefore political support for one side or the other is subject to change without notice; violence is more unfavorably regarded and more immediately attributed to the labor element than ever before. There is no labor class in this country as yet, consequently newspapers can with impunity play up the

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spectacularly unpopular incidents in labor strife.

Another recent development that affords good copy for the reactionaries, the internecine strife over the question of A. F. of L. or C.I.O. affiliation, may have alienated a considerable section of public opinion. The Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin* strike of the truck drivers over this question; the prolonged disruption of shipping on the Pacific coast, and the revolt of the dock workers in New York City, the outlaw strike of the printers in connection with the suspension of Hearst's Seattle *Post-Intelligencer;* the shut-down of the Consumers' Power Company in Saginaw. These incidents are indeed inevitable in the battle for mastery of the labor field by the two organizations, nevertheless, much will be made of them from now on. However, it must be admitted that the outspoken criticism of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L., each by the other, is quite salutary. Many are gratified to have the spotlight of hostile and inside criticism focused on the jobholders of the Federation. The lack of democratic rule in the A. F. of L. unions is being widely publicized and the entrenched interests there will doubtless sense the need for reform in the direction of observing at least the forms of representative government.

Industrial warfare brought to the first page an outstanding development of the year: the alliance of the administration and labor. In the 1936 presidential campaign the C.I.O. was an outspoken endorser of the President, although William Green announced early in the campaign that, as had been decided at the 1935 convention of the A. F. of L., the organization would be strictly non-partizan. He was soon smoked out of this position and made an outright declaration of his admiration for President Roosevelt. The President had easy sailing as far as the labor planks of his opponents were concerned. Landon said that every man should have the right to bargain collectively "without interference from any source." This was resented by union leaders as a veiled charge that union organization is based on intimidation. Colonel Knox deviated from a laissez-faire platform only to the extent of hoping that stock ownership by employees would lead to a dispersion of property ownership.

After the election, the administration was called upon to support the C.I.O. movement. Miss Perkins refused to condemn the sit-down strike; the President was mute during the disorder attendant on the C.I.O. attack on the independent steel companies; Governor Earle asked the Bethlehem Steel Company to shut its Johnstown plant to avoid bloodshed; the first injunction issued by the Michigan court was ignored by the sit-downers against whom it was issued. However, the second court order issued a few weeks later against the occupation of the Chrysler plant resulted in the evacuation of the plant on orders from Lewis, following a conference of Governor Murphy and President Roosevelt.

The settlement of these disputes follows an easily recognizable pattern. For example, seniority rights are an important factor. Thus, in the automobile industry there was no complaint about the scale of wages, or the hours of labor, but the scrapping of the assembly line man at thirty-eight was a real grievance. In most of the C.I.O. settlements, seniority is stipulated. In the big strikes, the C.I.O. demand for the closed shop, or what amounts to the same thing, sole bargaining agent for the workers, was not achieved. In the automobile strikes the union agreed not to solicit memberships on the company property, or on company time, but important concessions were obtained from the employers: wage increases to bring the rates back to the 1929 level, the forty-hour week, and an agreement to take back all on strike without prejudice.

The elements of strength which the C.I.O. has shown in attaining these benefits, especially in the General Motors strike, may be summarized as follows: the use of the most modern methods of persuasion, radio, direct mail campaigns, organized publicity work, flying squadrons to call on the men; the use of members of established unions for strike service, for example, miners were used at Youngstown; the stratagem of conserving union resources by concentrating the attack on one company; finally, the membership campaigns were well financed. Moreover, sit-down strikes were planned to tie up small plants making some essential part, the lack of which would tie up a much larger unit. The unfavorable reaction to the widespread use of this weapon for a few weeks this spring, especially in retail establishments where the general public was involved, has probably made it an obsolete weapon.

The sit-down strike is not the only basis for criticism of the C.I.O. Its enemies point to the following risks to continued success: the novelty and enthusiasm behind the movement may wane; the organization drives are so expensive that they may become unpopular with unionists paying the bill; the leaders are making some serious blunders, the Lewis statement, for example, calling on the President to support the automobile strike in return for campaign support by the C.I.O. Furthermore, the opposition of the American Federation of Labor is not to be taken lightly.

The most serious indictment of the C.I.O. unions is based on their alleged inability to live up to a contract. This was Girdler's stated reason for refusing to deal with the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. Since this episode and the publication of the Knudsen statement that there were two hundred stoppages of work since the U.A.W.A. signed a contract with General Motors in March, 1937, the auto workers' execu-

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tive committee ordered locals to fine and suspend any official who approves an unauthorized suspension of work. Unless a feeling of responsibility is soon engendered, the employers' drive for supervision of union elections, accounts and management by a governmental authority may be expected to materialize.

On the other hand, the stability of the established unions and the ease with which suspensions of work are obviated may be seen from the experience of the employers with the United Mine Workers. The contract expired on March 31, before a renewal had been signed. Nevertheless, the mines were closed for only one day. Similarly in the case of the railroad operating unions, the demand for a wage increase of 20 percent is being negotiated in a statesmanlike manner.

Whatever weaknesses in labor leadership have been brought out by the events of the year, the legal position of labor has been greatly strengthened by legislation and court decisions. Of course, the failure of the Wages and Hours bill to pass was a set-back, but the validation of the Wagner Act means that labor has its Magna Carta. The Supreme Court went so far in that decision as to broaden the definition of interstate commerce to include the manufacture of goods provided the materials used have been in interstate commerce, or if the products of the fabrications plant are destined for interstate shipment. This is important as paving the way for a new NRA. Furthermore, the National Labor Relations Board may be expected to take on new life since it has been legitimatized by the Supreme Court. The validation of the provisions of the Social Security Act is also looked upon as a forward step for labor. The passage of the Walsh-Healy Act requiring the forty-hour week and the payment of prevailing or union scale of wages on all work in connection with goods or services supplied to the federal government was a factor in the establishment of the forty-hour week in the steel industry. Similarly important is the Housing Act passed in the last hours of the session. It will be a source of strength to the "sheltered" unions in the American Federation group. The coal miners were gratified by the passage of the Guffey-Vinson Act. Of lesser importance was the measure removing prison-made goods from immunity to state regulation. The validation of the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Act, a reversal of the Supreme Court's earlier verdict in the New York State case, was looked upon as having broken the 5 to 4 deadlock in the Court regarding measures aimed at social improvement. The Railroad Retirement Act was passed after the transportation unions and the management had agreed to share the cost equally.

The C.I.O. has made much headway in the large industries and has a row of legislative acts to its credit, and it also has the support of the rank and file in many smaller industries. Nevertheless, difficult problems remain: the Federation is launching an organization campaign against the C.I.O.; several plant elections held to determine the representatives of the workers under the supervision of the National Labor Relations Board have been lost by the industrial union to the company union; the employers and the public are not yet convinced of C.I.O. responsibility; new and expensive conquests are essential to restoring the prestige of the movement since the failure of the steel strike. However, the industrial union seems so sound a device for the organization of modern industry that present-day trials may soon be relegated to the field of economic history.

NOTES OF A TRAVELER

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

ABOVE the waters of the Seine, Russian and German exposition towers stand like two giants shaking fists at each other. Is this a symbolic gesture prophetic of wars to come? Or is the effort of each to dominate the scene—where all else is still unfinished, still under construction—a figure of two fixed autocratic systems which are eventually to join in an awful friendship like that which once linked the Mohammedan tribes? Many have asked these questions. For they are, from the European point of view, the most fateful of all questions.

I have no answers. But there are some things to be said, or rather there are a few snapshots one should like to paste in an album. First, the idea of war as a more or less rational undertaking out of which Europe could hope to get any kind of practical settlement of existing difficulties is utterly discredited. The total of existing military resources is beyond all comparison with 1914. Even small neutral countries like Switzerland and Holland have built up a scientific defense which would make assault upon their boundaries a very risky affair. The determination of Poland and Czechoslovakia to stand their ground is more than enough to make would-be Napoleons think twice. And one glance at sections of the Maginot line suffices to make it quite clear that the next invasion of France would mean not a single Verdun but dozens of Verduns.

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In Switzerland an aviation conference brought modern aircraft from many countries. The citizens of Basel awoke to hear the hum of many ships over the clouds. It was a British bombing squadron coming from London; and when the sky cleared for a moment and the outlines of those beautiful men-of-war were revealed, everybody must have realized that today the technique of military attack is not the property of any one people. Of course some fool may still take seriously what is now only a game. The odds are, however, so decidedly against him that it is hard to take the idea of him seriously.

So much for all that. On the other hand militarization still gives the dictator countries a real diplomatic advantage. While they reckon with absolute control of the masses under them, other states are wrestling with grave social and economic disturbances. The malady may be so serious that revolution becomes a threat or an actuality. In such times dictators step in to help one side, in the hope of reaping a harvest. This is the method of indirect warfare—a policy not so new as it may seem, for Richelieu and others were its skilful protagonists.

This is an important part of the Spanish tragedy, for example. In so far as the civil war itself is concerned, Europeans are still of very divided sympathies. In the opinion of one group, General Franco's march on Madrid was justified; in that of the other, it was a great blunder. We need not argue the point. Certainly neither Italy nor Germany was interested in the success of the Franco cause as such nor was Moscow interested in Madrid's fight unselfishly. These nations merely reasoned that intervention would bring them diplomatic and economic gains. And one cannot believe them entirely mistaken. Of course they will have paid a good price for whatever they get, yet even so they will obtain something and this "something" weighs heavy in the diplomatic scale.

Similarly it is wholly probable that if a large-scale conflict between Japan and China broke out, the Soviets would step in to aid Chiang Kai-shek. This they would not do openly. Every possible blind would be thrown round the enterprise, but the fact would remain that Russian arms and munitions, Russian experts and flyers, would help to stiffen Chinese resistance. The hope would be that out of chaos and a possible set-back to Tokyo's ambitions, a real gain to Russia would result.

In Europe dictators have consistently gambled with these situations. Most people believe that the new form given the British Palestine mandate is based on the knowledge that further bloody fighting between Jews and Arabs could be exploited by a foreign power. The Germans were absolutely sure that revolution would break out in France, too. Nazis openly set the date at December 15, 1936, and arrangements were actually made to send help to the hypothetical fascist rebels. Belgium was likewise carefully watched during the days of the Degrelle boom. One hardly knows what might have happened there if Church and State had not joined hands to stem the tide.

These are some of the facts, and they deserve notice if one is anxious to form an estimate of fascist or communist ideologies. Far too many people think that these doctrines are mere philosophical forms, having no bearing on practical politics. Take for example Hitler's hostility to the Jews. It has often been said that nothing could be more grotesque than this silly attack upon a small minority of intellectuals and shopkeepers. I agree. Nevertheless anti-Semitism is a very real instrument in the hands of somebody anxious to gain a foothold in disturbed countries. Austrian Nazis, for example, would long since have become just a little clique of growlers if it were not for the antipathy to Judaism rooted in the Tyrol and Vienna soil. Throughout the Balkan states, as a matter of fact, the brown shirt is a ticket of admission to many circles just because it stands for a code of throwing stones at the synagogue. The whole story of German-Polish relationships under Hitler (a story out of which the Poles have to date made a tale of the end of the rainbow) is based upon the assumption that Warsaw might learn to hate the Jews worse than the Germans.

Doubtless the attitude of dictatorship toward the Christian Churches must be considered from the same point of view. Wherever anti-clericalism is strong, there will be sympathy for a government which knows how to put ecclesiastics in their proper places. To a certain extent this fact helps to explain parts of recent history in Austria and the Balkans. Primarily, however, it explains the leniency with which certain circles in France judged the Nazi situation. The Pope had condemned *l'Action Française,* at least indirectly; and therefore a number of people rejoiced when he could not, for reasons of prudence, condemn a German movement even more hostile to elemental Christian truths.

But of course the greatest chance is found in the realm of social conflict. The Soviets can pose as the emancipators of the working class. They can intervene whenever a revolutionary labor movement arises in a foreign country. Only the naive and the jejune will think that such intervention is primarily a matter of missionary zeal entertained by apostles of a new social philosophy. The Russians think, and since 1919 have always thought, in terms of advantages for their country. To prove this it is necessary only to remember that Russia bitterly opposed Germany's entry into the League of Nations, on the ground that this weakened the opportunity for later joint warfare on the Western countries. After the unsuccessful

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German national uprising in 1923, the Russian press bitterly remarked that it preferred a government of field marshals to a government of "socialist traitors"—i. e., of men anxious to arrive at some understanding with the British and the French.

For their part the Nazis pose as the great antagonists of Bolshevism. And they succeed in making an impression on nice gentlemen who see with pleasure that strikes are impossible in Nazi-land, that prices and wages are rigidly controlled, and that trade unions have ceased to exist. Again I say that only the naive and the jejune will put any stock in such pious dithyrambs. Let me cite just a few recent happenings. A new law compels farmers to deliver all grain to the government, which in turn guarantees to deliver substitute feed stuffs. Another new law gives the state absolute control over forests, thus determining the uses to which wood can be put industrially or domestically. And earlier regulations concerning raw materials gravely hamper every manufacturing enterprise, so long as there is a prior need for war materials. Thus automobile production in many German factories ceased at the end of June, to resume at such time as steel and other essentials would again be on hand. What more has Russia done? I believe that except for a possible handful of bankers and great industrialists, the Nazi government today gets more support from the bulk of former members of the Communist party than from the bourgeoisie.

I may therefore conclude by saying that the dictatorship ideologies are far too unstable to be termed of positive or permanent diplomatic importance. They are rapidly becoming mere instruments of national aggression, to be made use of whenever a chance for indirect warfare, i. e., for aid to any party in a foreign state which desires intervention. That Hitler could join forces tomorrow with Stalin is a possibility not to be ignored. The future history of Europe will to a certain extent be determined, I think, by two things: first, will the Spanish civil war prove an object lesson sufficient to dampen the ardor of would-be revolutionists in other lands; second, will the control of the masses by dictators prove as stable as has hitherto been assumed? For the moment it looks as if the object lesson had been taken to heart, and also as if the dictators were rather weaker than they were a year ago.

In order that this temporary advantage be rendered secure, there must arise a feeling that peace can be reached only through an unceasing effort to establish a reasonable social harmony. I think that feeling is everywhere stronger than it was even a short while ago. About it there may be something to say on another occasion.

INSURANCE PIONEER

By TERENCE O'DONNELL

DUE TO its beneficial aspects insurance in all its branches, as we are familiar with them today, may properly be considered social service of a very necessary order. Much of this development has taken place since the beginning of the nineteenth century, at which time life and any other form of insurance was in a rather doubtful infancy. It required vision for the early pioneers to visualize the beneficial aspects of life, health and accident assurance in that early day, set as the requirements were in the rather foggy social and living aspects of the time. Whatever was attempted by those early pioneers in this field is worth recording, as having its effects upon our insurance benefits of today. Yet many authorities have overlooked one of the most interesting of all insurance ventures: one founded by Pope Gregory XVI, which was enabled to have its being only because it was founded in the days when the Vicar of Christ enjoyed a more extensive temporal sovereignty.

This creditable pioneer insurance company was the Societa Pontificia di Assicurazoni nello Stato Pontificio, and while a critical actuary might say it was bound to fail even without the fall of the Papal States because its charter and capitalization attempted too much, of this latter surmise we dare not feel too sure. But first a word about Pope Gregory XVI himself, for this Pope has received cavalier treatment even from Catholic historians, many of whom have assessed greater abilities to Pius IX, his successor.

The parents of Pope Gregory XVI were members of the minor nobility. Having studied for the priesthood and having been ordained, he was elected to the College of Cardinals. On February 2, 1831, he was elected Pope. It has been often claimed that the liberalizing national and social ideas prevalent throughout the Continent at that time found opposition in the person of Pope Gregory XVI. While this in a way was true, we must remember that this Pope's subjects were still king-minded and he had no recourse but to comport himself accordingly in the temporal realm. Much of the adverse criticism directed at him as a reactionary originated with English historians. Against their criticisms we may offset the remark of Bernadetti, an Italian

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historian, who stated that the English were always ready to suggest to others the reforms they did not care to try at home.

Now, was Pope Gregory XVI really reactionary and unreceptive to suggestions which might modernize the conduct of the States of the Church? On the contrary, we read that in April, 1831, the first year of his pontificate, the representatives of Austria, Russia, France, Prussia and Great Britain met at Rome to consider the question of the reform of the newly integrated Papal States. They urged certain reforms in the judiciary, introduction of more laymen into administrative affairs, popular election of the commune and municipal councils, and the administration of the state finances by skilled laymen. After giving these suggestions thoughtful consideration Pope Gregory issued a score of edicts which were designed to carry out and implement as many of these recommendations as were possible and practical.

If we agree that he may have been caught upon the horns of a dilemma in urging such reforms the captious criticism does not seem to hold water, for surely in relation to the formation of the Societa Pontificia di Assicurazoni there had been no continental and diplomatic pressure brought to bear. Cardinal Wiseman in his interesting memoirs of his stay at Rome under four Popes tells how the Societa had its genesis. A delegation of citizens prominent in Rome waited upon His Holiness and urged the establishment of an insurance company; but even they must have found him already open-minded about the necessity for such an institution. Remember that the Popes had but recently returned from the Napoleonic exile, and that in 1819 there had been founded the pioneer French Life Insurance Company, the Compagnie d'Assurances Générale. The social advantages of insurance as offered by that company to Frenchmen could not altogether have been lost to Popes forced to maintain all sorts of contacts, temporal as well as spiritual, in the midst of a baffling exile.

What may have encouraged Pope Gregory XVI to give the proposed venture his cooperation was the fact that at that time the cholera was raging in the Italian peninsula, bringing intolerable social problems to bear. To have formed the Societa itself augurs independence of thought and action on the part of the Pontiff, for there still remained in church circles the lingering apprehension that life insurance was immoral and usurious. We can only surmise that Pope Gregory XVI preferred to cut himself free from those lingering objections, and take his place in the ranks of foresighted rulers whose only thought was the welfare of their subjects.

No insurance company may expect successful operation without scientifically compiled tables of mortality and life expectancies, and these the Societa Pontificia set out to have in most modern and ample degree. At that time the Northampton and Carlisle tables were the ones favored by British actuaries, while the French companies used tables compiled by De Parcieux and others. But tables of mortality, while they may have good general application, are often quite useless when applied to particular localities. Up to this time there had been no general census in Italy, and a census was a necessity to bring the Roman society's tables to a proper norm. So a census was taken, by the help of the parish priests. It is doubtful if a census could have been taken without the help of the parish system, for each parish priest became ipso facto the census collector for his parish. The Italians of that early day had the gregarious instinct even when they were farmers; they preferred to live in villages and towns and each day make the often distant journey to their farms. But the parish priest also had his glebe or *podere* elsewhere, and thus he had a double-check upon his census figures. Births, lives, death, all were compiled.

So in that early day, when there were at the most not more than four well-rated life insurance companies functioning in England and on the Continent, with limited mortality tables, the Societa Pontificia had not only one, but several mortality tables, for ample death and life contingencies. It had a capital of 1,000 shares of the par value of 500 scudos (crowns) each. It aimed to assure lives, to pay life annuities or limited life annuities; and in addition it offered indemnities against illness, accident, the diseases or pestilences afflicting domestic animals, and against storms. Of course it excluded such happenings as wars and earthquakes.

Of special interest is the fact that the income and property of the Societa were to form a fund distinct from all other finances of the Papal States, although its Director General (the first Director General was Cardinal Gamberini) was responsible to the Pope. It required the deposit of the actual working capital before the Societa began to transact its insurance business. It required receipts to be kept separately under each class of insurance as aforementioned, to integrate the security for the policies issued. It prescribed an annual accounting and periodical valuation reports and statements. Its charter provided for the receipt of further deposits representing reserve or present values of policies, the same to be held in trust. In short, the charter of the Societa is at the same time the surprisingly modern constitution of a going concern and an admirable compendium of the conduct of corporations as well.

Actuarial critics would say the Societa in its many-sided beneficences attempted to cover too large a field. We do not know whether it could

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have developed its ambitious plan to the ultimate satisfaction of all concerned. On the other hand, we cannot be sure the very comprehensive plan could not have worked itself out very well and confounded all critics. The peculiar conditions obtaining in the States of the Church, a state of allegiance which consolidated spiritual and national ambitions and loyalties, might have made the Societa an outstanding milestone in social betterment and a profitable venture for all concerned, if political conditions had permitted.

In 1860, the Societa Pontificia came to an enforced end. Again the temporal power of the Popes was ending, and a new Kingdom of Italy, secular this time, was formally declared in existence. Now the Societa Pontificia di Assicurazoni nello Stato Pontificia remains only as one of those only too often lost pages of the social advance of history. But was it abortive? We hardly think so. Even the book containing the charter and tables of the Societa, a superb example of the Italian bookbinders' art, remains with Pope Gregory's arms emblazoned in gold upon its leather cover, to be an impressive recourse for the researcher interested in such things as social betterment. Fifteen years after the establishment of United Italy there were seventeen Italian insurance companies and thirty-three foreign ones operating in the peninsula. Under no circumstances could this quick and expansive growth of insurance have happened had not Pope Gregory XVI wisely sowed the seed with the establishment of the Societa Pontificia.

WHY PARLIAMENTS HAVE TWO HOUSES

By ANDRÉ MAUROIS

WHAT is the origin of the idea of having a nation governed by two parliamentary bodies, an idea which seems rather strange, but which nevertheless is operative in France, England, the United States and a round dozen other countries? Like most ideas that have made an impression on men, it was born of several historical accidents.

In the Middle Ages when a king needed money and had to seek it from his people, it seemed quite natural to convoke the representatives of the principal classes of possible contributors: the nobility, the clergy and the communes. The assembly of these three groups was called the Estates General and it was convoked under different forms by the sovereigns, all of whom dismissed the estates in haste as soon as they had obtained the subsidies they had desired of them.

But it transpired in England that the clergy demanded that they meet apart from the other two estates. The priests wanted to vote their contributions in special assemblies. So only two estates remained. They could have sat together but the representatives of the communes and the petty nobility, intimidated by the great lords, hit upon the practise of meeting in secret committee. Thus two assemblies were formed: the Lords' Chamber and the Chamber of the Communes. They grew in power, especially after a usurper, having replaced the legitimate king, had to appear conciliatory to them in order to be accepted by them and the country.

This cooperation between the crown and the two chambers might have failed, but in fact it succeeded rather well. In the seventeenth century the King of England wanted to do without Parliament but did not succeed in ruling without it. Europe became accustomed to the view that two forms of government were possible: that of France and Spain, or absolute monarchy, and that of Great Britain, which might be designated as parliamentary monarchy.

Which was the better of these two forms? It was a war that settled the question for the people of the time. At the beginning of the eighteenth century England, which had in Marlborough (the Malbrouck of the famous song) an excellent general, won a number of military successes. That small country suddenly took its place beside France, Spain and the Empire of Austria, as a great European power. Such success inspired in philosophers and theorists a considerable respect for the British Constitution. A perusal of Montesquieu and Voltaire is all that is needed to see that at that time the English Parliament was the fashionable régime of the day in the eyes of the French progressives. Indeed, all through the period of "enlightenment" the English example was before European intellectuals, misconceived in several ways —when, for example, the executive function of the monarch was pictured as something quite distinct from the legislative function of king and parliament—but correctly seen to be that of a parliament of two chambers.

When after great upheavals France came to adopt a constitution, she chose quite naturally the two-chamber system. She had like England a House of Peers (which later became the Senate) and a Chamber of Deputies, first elected by restricted, later by universal, suffrage. Little by little this system was copied all over Europe. After the war of 1914, when the democratic countries won out over the absolutist empires, the two-chamber system became universal and the smallest of peoples wanted to have its parliament just as the prestige of Imperial Rome in ancient timer influenced the most distant province to have its temples and its baths.

Then came the period 1920-1937. It was, alas, a period of unfortunate setbacks for the democratic countries. In Russia, Italy, Germany, new régimes which scoffed at parliaments and governed without recourse to the traditional assemblies, came forward. Will parliamentary democracy triumph again? Or will humanity after an experience of 700 years be fascinated by a new formula? The answer to these questions depends, as in the eighteenth century, on diplomatic or military successes. Whichever form of government wins out in the future in the arena of statesmen or the field of battle, the theorists will undoubtedly discover the profoundest reasons for the superior quality of the victor.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—Archbishop Mitty of San Francisco has issued a pastoral calling for an earnest celebration throughout his archdiocese of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitution of the United States, September 17. More than 200,000 persons were expected to attend a solemn pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving, celebrated by Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia, at the Philadelphia Municipal Stadium, to mark the same annisary. * * * The 1937 convention at Paris of Pax Romana, international Catholic student federation, was attended by 700 students from 27 nations. The 1938 congress will be held at Ljublana, Jugoslavia; the United States was tentatively designated as the scene of the 1939 congress. * * * Cardinal Gaetano Bisleti, who was prefect of the Congregation of Seminaries and of the Universities of Studies, died August 30, at the age of 81. * * * In a pastoral letter Bishop Byrne of San Juan, Puerto Rico, assailed the "eugenic" laws which have just gone into effect on the island and declared, "As Catholics it is our duty to repudiate this immoral legislation and to oppose it like soldiers of Christ." Absolution for those who publicly advocate it or cooperate with organizations fostering birth control or sterilization is reserved to the Bishop alone. A joint pastoral prepared by the Philippine hierarchy condemns birth control and voices "perfect submission to the doctrine of our Mother the Church concerning marriage, so wisely declared and discussed in the Encyclical, "Casti Connubii." * * * Montezuma Seminary, established by the American Hierarchy for training aspirants to the Mexican priesthood, opened September 8, with an enrollment of 350. * * * It was reported at the fifteenth annual Rural and Industrial Conference at Antigonish that Nova Scotia has 1,063 study clubs, 42 in rural, 285 in fishing and 316 in industrial districts. Credit unions number 106, cooperative stories 25 (with 14 more ready for charters), lobster canneries 16 and fish processing plants 5. The conference went on record as strongly opposed to Communism, National Socialism, Fascism and other dictatorships.

The Nation.—Representative Taber, Republican member of the House Appropriations Committee, announced that the total of appropriations, reappropriations and permanent appropriations made during the past session of Congress was $10,252,892,556.60. He predicted a deficit for the current fiscal year of something between $3,000,000,000 and $4,000,000,000. Representative Cannon, Democratic chairman of the same committee, put the figure at $9,355,595,892.57, cutting down some items and leaving out reappropriations. He stated that the budget may be made to balance this year through new tax income, except for public debt retirement. * * * The civilian employees of the federal government numbered 840,159 on May 31. In 1932 the figure was 570,000. On June 30, 1932, the ratio of classified competitive positions to unclassified was about 80 to 20. The ratio on December 31, 1936, was 62 to 38. The trend had begun to reverse itself, however, during the last half of 1936 when the number of classified employees increased 16,513 and the unclassified decreased 9,677. * * * Reports made at the Executive Council session of the A. F. of L. put the paid-up membership of the Federation at 3,600,000, a gain of 1,000,000 since September 5, 1936 when 900,000 were lost through the suspension of the C.I.O. units. The A. F. of L. indicated its intention of fighting the C.I.O. vigorously in many fields, but, by refusing to expel the suspended unions, tried to leave the way open for reconciliation. * * * Motor fatalities for the first seven months numbered 20,690, an increase of 2,270 or 12 percent over last year. Because of increased road mileage, the fatalities during July per 100,000,000 vehicle-miles fell 7 percent in spite of a rise of 5 percent in deaths. * * * United States imports were $153,000,000 greater than exports during 1936. We exported $34,000,000 more worth of merchandise than we imported, but the excess payment of $187,000,000 in international exchange of services more than offset this smallest merchandise excess since 1895.

The Wide World.—Pope Pius XI received in private audience the Marquis of Aycinena, Pablo de Churruca, Vatican Chargé d'Affaires for Nationalist Spain. The audience completed the Marquis's presentation of his "letters of Cabinet" to the Holy See. Nationalist forces captured Santander and started a major offensive against Asturias Province and the seaport of Gijon, only Loyalist-held territory remaining in Northwestern Spain. On the Aragon front, Nationalists counter-attacked to relieve pressure on Saragossa. * * * Representatives of Britain, France and the United States will attend the annual Nazi party congress in Nuremberg this month. * * * A proposal by the Hungarian government to resume part payments of instalments due on its $1,965,632 indebtedness to the United States was accepted by Secretary of State Hull who referred to the offer as "a heartening sign of recognition of the importance of conserving the sanctity of inter-governmental contractual obligations." * * * Thirty-two more persons were executed in Soviet Russia. * * * The Chautemps Cabinet decreed the merger of six French railways in a State-controlled company. * * * The Foreign Ministers of the Little Entente concluded a conference at Sinaia, Rumania, which emphasized the solidarity of Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Rumania, their loyalty to the League of Nations and to France, and support of Secretary Hull's July 16 peace declaration. They disapproved of intervention in Spain and announced that the volume of their trade had increased considerably in the past year.

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Sino-Japanese Struggle.—On the battlefield Sino-Japanese operations enjoyed a lull during the past week.

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The Japanese reported the complete occupation of strategic Nankow Pass. They also extended their line of battle to the South for the first time, bombing the city of Canton. Preparations for a big push into the North China Peiping-Tientsin area were reported with chances of success generally held good. Large bodies of Chinese troops withdrew to well-prepared positions inland from Shanghai, where foreign observers expected that despite a lack of artillery the defenders could successfully hold out. All in all, by strategy in drawing large bodies of Chinese troops from the real Japanese objectives, and by dint of superior force of arms and better-trained troops, the Nipponese seemed assured of their North China goal within several months, despite increasingly determined Chinese resistance. The diplomatic arena was more active. A Japanese plane wounded the British Ambassador to China, who appeared to have neglected the proper precautions for his safe passage through the danger zone. This brought forth a strong British note of protest. Another case of mistaken identity was the bombing of the S. S. President Hoover by Chinese planes, killing one sailor and wounding several others. China dispatched an immediate apology and Secretary of State Hull warned American merchant vessels to avoid the Shanghai zone, where there were 2,000 Americans, with 500 women and children then awaiting rescue. The conclusion of a Russo-Chinese Anti-War pact was announced and General Chiang Kai-shek appealed to the western powers to intervene and protect their interests and the sanctity of treaties, mentioning the United States as a possible ally. Various groups in this country, capitalizing on anti-Japanese sentiment, seemed to be working for American intervention, with others much in favor of our taking a common stand with Great Britain, whose Chinese investments are heaviest of all.

The Vatican Polyglot.—Pope Pius has just assigned the direction and administration of the Vatican Polyglot Printing Office to the Salesian Fathers, the order founded by Saint Don Bosco. He did this in memory of a visit he paid in 1884 to Don Bosco in the Salesian motherhouse in Turin, where the Salesians already had the most advanced printing plant in Europe. The Vatican Polyglot was founded by Pope Pius IV (1559-1565) so that the Holy See might issue works of the Eastern Fathers free from errors which were a peril through the work of the new heretics and Protestants. The first director was Paolo Manuzio, son of Aldo Manuzio, the learned humanist who was the greatest printer of history, producing the series of Aldine editions in Venice. The Polyglot was, during the following four centuries, linked up with the printing office of the Apostolic Camera and then with that of the *Populo Romano,* established by Pius V, and finally with that of the Propaganda Fide. All the printing work of the Vatican will come together in the new organization. The Polyglot has characters for Gothic, ancient and modern Greek, Arabic, Syrian, Armenian, Hebrew, Kurd, Chaldean, Tigris, Chinese and Japanese. It is the greatest assemblage on the Continent, and only the Oxford Press has something similar.

Cotton.—In a letter to the New York *Times,* James E. Boyle, Professor of Rural Economics at Cornell University, declares that the policy of the American government in the past eight years has been "ruinous" to the operators of "the world's natural cotton field." In 1929 the Hoover Farm Board tried to corner the cotton market and cut the price from 18 to 5 cents a pound. Announcing high-price intentions it started Egypt and Brazil producing cotton for export on a large scale. The protectionist Smoot-Hawley Tariff made it impossible for many of our best customers in England, France, Germany and Japan to continue their purchases. The 1933 AAA program of a 4½-cent processing tax on cotton domestically consumed and cotton loans of 10 to 12 cents for reducing acreage and the 1934 Bankhead Act putting curtailment on a compulsory basis, resulted in American cotton being undersold in the world market; 1932-3 exports of 8,400,000 bales fell to 4,800,000 in 1934-5. The administration plan just approved provides for loans of 9 cents a pound, with 3 cents a pound subsidy on 65 percent of the crop, on the promise of new crop control legislation, although five years of American crop curtailment have resulted in the largest world cotton crop of all time. American policy for the past eight years has reduced our cotton exports 2,500,000 bales at the very time world cotton exports have increased 7,000,000 bales. The price of cotton is exactly one-half what it was before these policies were instigated and 1,000,000 American workers have lost their jobs. Professor Boyle cites figures of 1920-27 that clearly show that the size of the American crop does not control the world price of cotton, which depends on two factors: the world crop and the world demand. He points to the anomaly of Southern farmers in tatters plowing under one-quarter of the 1933 cotton crop because of "overproduction." He believes we should grow more rather than less cotton; he would increase domestic consumption and lower tariff barriers to provide the foreign purchasing power that would restore some of our lost market. Persistence in the present curtailment policy will reduce the Southern planter to "a ward of the federal government."

Catholic Charities.—The twenty-third meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Charities opened in St. Paul, Minn., on August 29. Delegates were welcomed by Mayor Mark H. Gehan and the Most Reverend John Gregory Murray. In his presidential address, James Fitzpatrick emphasized three ideas that must be held fast in the present social confusion: there is God; there is property; there is common sense. At a round table discussion, Miss Marguerite T. Boylan asserted that a diocesan central office is now organized in sixty-six archdioceses and dioceses in thirty-five states. The parish, she pointed out, recognized as the traditional unit of church organization, has a primary responsibility for ministering to the needs of its own people, and in so far as possible all activities should be centered in the parish. Parishes with most limited resources frequently have the greatest number of social problems and are forced to look beyond the parish for assistance. The resources of money

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and service of more favorably situated parishes, she concluded, can be brought to the poor parishes through the diocesan organization. Miss Rose McHugh stated that more than 471,000 children in 185,000 families are now being cared for in their own homes under thirty-seven State-Federal programs for aid to dependent children under the Social Security Act. At the second general session, Bishop Aloisius J. Muench declared that a declining population would bring ever smaller consumption and predicted it would cause increasing farm surpluses and unemployment among all classes—thereby increasing the problems of charity.

Railway Labor.—The operating brotherhoods of the railways have demanded a 20 percent wage increase. The carriers refused the demand, stating that such an increase would be the finishing touch in ruining the roads. The unions claimed the workers are not responsible for the bad and dishonest financing which have brought the roads to their dangerous condition, and that they should not have to do the suffering for it. They were armed with a strike vote to enforce their point of view. When extended negotiations failed to bring any agreement between the two parties, the National Mediation Board set up by the Railway Labor Act offered to furnish a mediator and both sides accepted. On August 28 the mediator, Dr. William M. Leiserson, began hearings in Chicago, dealing with the "Big Five" brotherhoods, which have 250,000 members, and the management separately. If he fails to find a way out acceptable to the disputants he announced he will ask them to accept an arbitration board, either chosen by themselves or appointed by the President. A ruling by such a board would have the practical effect of a federal court ruling. The unions have indicated they do not want to follow such a procedure. In any case, if either side should refuse arbitration, the mediator could request the President to appoint a fact-finding commission, which, according to terms of the Railway Labor Act, would have to report its finding within thirty days. After that another thirty days would have to elapse before either party to the dispute could take any action. A railway strike has been postponed indefinitely but not taken from the realm of possibility.

Blessed Martin.—The centenary celebration of the solemn beatification of Blessed Martin de Porres, the South American Negro lay Brother, is being held at the national shrine of the Blessed Martin, Union City, N. J., September 10-12, under the distinguished patronage of the Most Reverend Thomas J. Walsh, Bishop of Newark. Blessed Martin, whose miraculous and apostolic life stirred all Peru nearly three hundred years ago, is causing no little stir in our own day and our own land. The already widespread devotion to him is based not merely upon the proven power of his intercession, but even more upon the fact that he has become both the symbol and the pledge of the catholicity of the Church. He is the visible proof that the Church is no respecter of persons, that it has but one standard of values for all men. Granted adequate evidence of heroic sanctity, the honors of the altar are accorded without concern for class or color.

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.—Birmingham, Ala., carried on an intensive city-wide goodwill campaign to improve relations there between the Negro and White races on Sunday, September 6. In practically every Protestant church two speakers, one representing each race, delivered a short goodwill talk. After these short sermons the various congregations were invited by the speakers to attend a mass meeting that same afternoon at Tuggle Institute, noted Negro school. The principal speakers were Dr. George W. Carver, famed Negro chemist of Tuskegee, and Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, Negro woman leader of the National Youth Administration. This Sunday of services climaxed a week of celebration called Birmingham Negro's Sixty-six Years of Progress Exposition which traced by pageant, story and outdoor meeting what their race had done in the development of the city as a great Southern industrial center. * * * The Second World Conference on Faith and Order held at Edinburgh, August 3-18, has passed into history. One can now make some comparisons with the Conference at Lausanne held ten years ago, and note what progress upon the road to Christian unity has been achieved. Although the obstacles to intercommunion were not removed, the proposal to unite the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements with other similar movements in a single World Council of Churches was heartily approved. * * * About 270 delegates from twenty-three foreign countries joined with scores of American Quakers in informal discussions preliminary to the Friends' World Conference which began September 1 at Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges.

Food.—The League of Nations has just published mankind's first joint official report on the subject of nutrition. The striking progress made during the past century in health, stature and longevity are attributed to better nutrition. Poverty and ignorance, however, remain the formidable obstacles to health. The report states that as the result of insufficient purchasing power or as the result of imperfect division between resources and food and other objects of expenditure or through ignorance of food values or carelessness and indifference or as the result of the maintenance of food prices at levels involving hardship in large sections of the community or other causes, "millions of people in all parts of the globe either are suffering inadequate physical development or disease due to malnutrition or are living in a state of subnormal health which could be improved if they consumed more or different foods." Germans have to pay more for their food than most other people and Germany appears to be the Western country most exposed to malnutrition. The report further asserts that thirteen investigations in the United States between 1906 and 1924, each involving thousands of children, showed that on the basis of clinical examination the average percentage suffering from malnutrition was 22.3. The League report is intended to serve as the basis for a world-wide nutrition policy during the next few years.

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The Play

Mr. Lavery and a National Theatre

AN INTERESTING compendium to Mr. Emmet Lavery's article on Catholic plays in THE COMMONWEAL of August 6 is the news from London of the cordial reception given to Mr. Lavery's own play, "The First Legion." It is evident that Mr. Lavery's drama has appealed far more forcibly to the English critics than it did to their brothers in New York. As the New York critics are all non-Catholics there is some excuse for their lack of interest in the theme of "The First Legion," but how they could have failed to recognize its literary and psychological merit is a mystery. But the saddest thing about the New York production was that the Catholics of the city failed to support the play. This was not the case in Boston and many other cities, but it is a black mark against the intelligence of the Catholics of the metropolis. The announcement that Mr. Lavery has just finished another play on a Catholic subject, in which Cardinal Newman is the chief protagonist, and in which Cardinal Manning is another leading figure, will probably give the New York Catholics an opportunity to redeem themselves. Such a play will require financial backing, and if Jewish or Protestant money cannot be found as it was found for "The First Legion," there ought to be wealthy Catholics interested enough in Catholic drama to furnish the necessary aid. If the Church is to attain its due position in America its children must be willing to support it not only sacramentally, but artistically and intellectually.

Another item in the recent news from London is of interest in this connection. The British National Theatre has just bought a plot of ground on which it is to erect a playhouse dedicated to the classic drama. Now the classic theatre has in it many Catholic plays or plays in the Catholic tradition. Many of these plays will never be produced upon the stage except at special performances or through the efforts of a national organization. In England there are already such organizations, notably the Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon, the Malvern Festival, and the Old Vic, but the British National Theatre will furnish a more elaborate and more heavily endowed institution. Since the failure of the New Theatre there have been no attempts in America toward any such ideal. Charles Coburn has announced plans for such a theatre, but that apparently is as far as things have gotten. The most interesting project in this direction is the recent founding of The Mercury Theatre by Orson Welles and John Houseman which I wrote about in a recent article in THE COMMONWEAL, but this organization is at present limited in its scope and probably in its backing. What an exciting thing it would be if The Mercury Theatre became the starting point of an American National Theatre devoted to the classic drama! This would be an organization indeed for Catholics to get behind, a theatre which in its very nature must produce many plays saturated by the Catholic spirit.

Mr. Lavery's idea of a purely Catholic theatre is an admirable one and one which should be encouraged, but meanwhile it is surely the duty of Catholics to encourage a theatre which will present many of the great dramas of our past, and in which few plays would be condemned as harmful to faith and morals. The classic drama, despite its outspokenness, is rarely decadent or unwholesome; that is one of the reasons that it has become the classic drama. Merely negative efforts in the form of white and black lists will be of little avail if we do not add positive action by making it possible for our public to see plays of which we do approve. It was heartening that so much Shakespeare was given us last season. It shows that the public is there and willing to do. But we cannot afford to leave the field entirely to individual commercial enterprise. We must organize and establish a permanent organization which will be to the drama what the Metropolitan Opera House has been to opera. If such a theatre is to come into being it is surely the duty of Catholics to support it to the hilt. It might not be too early to begin the formation of a Catholic committee devoted to the idea.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Communications

TWO WORLDS

Memel (Kleipeda), Lithuania.

TO the Editor: A visit to two different countries in order is a happy means of forming a contrast to bring out in positive relief the true conditions amongst the people in either. Two days ago I completed a somewhat thorough investigation of social things as they exist in Leningrad of Soviet Russia. To leave there and advance to Lithuania is like progressing with Dante from the Inferno to Paradise. Not that Lithuania is exactly like heaven; but the actual difference between the two countries is so great that the simile is not without some exactitude.

The condition of the people in Leningrad is absolutely and positively, though perhaps unbelievably, deplorable. Poverty and destitution on every side. Low money value, little wages and tremendously high prices. All the passengers who went ashore from the ship to spend several days in the city returned with a sigh of relief. The experience was definitely depressing without any tone of relief at any moment of the time. For me, however, there was a time of relief. For on Sunday I was able to attend a Gregorian High Mass at the Cathedral church on Newski Prospect, where one hundred years ago the Jesuits labored for the Faith. There are nine Catholic churches in and about Leningrad administered by the Dominicans of Paris. They are so heavily taxed, however, that the only social good that they can perform is celebration of Mass on Sunday (only), which is attended by the people in very great numbers.

One cannot buy fresh meat in Leningrad. The Soviet watchman on ship had declared to me that there were meat stores all over the city. I spent one entire morning seeking one and was finally informed by another Soviet member that meat is distributed to the people early in the

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morning by the "Government" in trucks which ride along the streets to grant the people their supply. The next morning I rose very early, boarded a tram car and rode over the city. Not alone were there no meat trucks in sight, but I witnessed no evidence of any truck at all, until about eleven o'clock when a truck wound its weary way to the port docks with a load of sturgeon for the ship. It actually took that truck eight hours to carry, load after load, a cargo of sturgeon, delaying our departure that many hours. That task should have taken two hours.

If the visiting American tourist to Russia closed his eyes as he entered the Soviet touring car until he arrived at the particular places that the guide wished the tourist to see and admire, the tourist might possibly retain some spirit of being alive. Otherwise the streets of Leningrad impress him as the neglected alleyways of some abandoned hospital. Old men and women sitting in doorways staring into space; lifeless looking babies; quiet, inactive children; listless youths and faded girls.

How different when one passes into Finland or Lithuania. Here the buildings are not crumbling evidences of a splendor that was, but clean edifices, well painted and peopled with spirited citizens, sturdy, colorful of face, talkative and well dressed.

In Leningrad most of the people are clothed in rags. I saw ladies dressed in burlap rags; people sleeping in the streets. No such sights in Lithuania. The stores are attractive and pleasantly furnished. Articles are not many-times overpriced as in Russia; and the articles are numerous and various. In the harbor of Leningrad one can see but one lone tug doing all the various employments of a great city dock. At Memel they are in abundance.

LEO I. WASHILA.

WORLD'S FAIR

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO the Editor: I see that there is to be a Christian Science building at the 1939 World's Fair, and that the Soviet government is to have an exhibit. Why should there not be something Catholic, something universal?

Where, save in the Catholic Church, is the world's inexhaustible well of beauty, of drama, of music, of literature and art and science and philosophy? Where else the answers to the questions that perplex the world?

It would be for wiser men than I to decide upon the method. Perhaps a shrine of Christ the King, with some such service as perpetual vespers . . . one refuge from confusion, one place for God? Perhaps a dramatization of the Catholic program of social reform? Perhaps a review of Catholicism through the centuries? Perhaps . . . but as I have said, that is for wiser men.

Would not the Catholics of the world, now realizing anew the priceless heritage that is theirs, contribute generously? Is not a World's Fair an opportunity for incalculable good in combating the errors now grievously afflicting mankind? Is not something of this kind the natural enterprise of the Church that was commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature?

JOSEPH BREIG.

Books

An Inexorable Character

The Letters of Lenin; translated and edited by Elizabeth Hill and Doris Mudie. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $4.00.

A MAN who knew Lenin well once said of him that he wasn't a human being but only a mathematical problem, and I was reminded of this apparent paradox while reading this collection of his letters, published for the first time in English. They absolutely justify the accusation that there was nothing in the world he cared for except the aim he set himself to attain.

Lenin in a certain sense was an inexorable character, which probably was partly due to his Mongol blood. The years when the Mongol Tartars kept in subjection the dominions of the Ruriks left traces which never will be effaced. Most Russians have Tartar blood in their veins, which explains more clearly than anything else the Russian psychology in general, and Lenin's in particular.

His letters, though tedious to read, are of immense interest, especially to those who like myself knew him personally, before he had started on his career of agitator and political conspirator. They give an excellent description of the manner in which political agitation was conducted in Russia, at the time when the revolutionary movement began to grow. Unfortunately in order to understand its development, it is necessary to read all 340 letters, which is rather hard work. Because private correspondence was tampered with by Russian police authorities, Lenin's own political and social ideas are not found in them, only a discussion of the means to be used to insure the success of the revolutionary party. And the general impression one gets out of this correspondence is that Lenin, while an admirable destructor, had no definite idea as to how the new order of things was to be established—again a Mongol trait.

Now and then, however, occurs an illuminating phrase which shows how well Lenin understood the weak side of the people and also illustrates the eternal struggle between youth and the elder generations, which made union in the cause difficult. This is made clear in one of his letters to his wife, in which he says among other things: "From the point of view of economism the young people waged a systematic, persistent and dishonest struggle against the Liberation of Labour Group throughout 1898." This phrase explains a good many things which helped the development of Bolshevism in Russia. It must never be forgotten that these "young people," as Lenin calls them, are precisely those who later on seized executive power in the country, and became known as Bolsheviks. When Lenin was writing this letter in 1900, he had not yet become completely identified with this revolutionary group.

The Siberian letters proce how different was exile in that distant land under the czars from its imaginative depiction by journalists. And certainly the most interesting letters are those written during the World War, when Lenin and his friends were doing everything in their

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power to bring about and foment revolution in a country already on the verge of collapse.

A selected number of letters out of this correspondence would give a more intelligible picture of Lenin and his work to the foreign reader, who cannot possibly know all the undercurrents that finally carried the Bolsheviks to power in Russia, and would give a better idea of what really brought about the triumph of people who due to complicated circumstances suddenly found themselves at the head of a movement already beyond their control. Lenin, had he lived, would today find himself more or less in the position of the Girondins during the French Revolution. With all his Mongol brutality he lacked the energy of a Danton, while possessing all the ruthlessness of this French agitator. He could destroy, he could not carry on.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

Japan and China

The Far East Comes Nearer, by Hessell Tiltman. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. $3.00.

WITH UNDECLARED warfare raging between Japan and China, it behooves Americans in all walks of life to acquire as quickly as possible an understanding of the causes that brought this about. Hessell Tiltman, a thoroughly competent English author, journalist and "incorrigible traveller" with some twenty-two books on foreign affairs to his credit, has presented us with a book that brings the crisis in the Far East up to the present with revealing and sensational material.

Starting with the Manchurian crisis, brought about by Japan in her need to expand to the continent, Tiltman brings out the principal fact which enabled Japan to accomplish this, namely, the complete lack of cooperation between the two great powers, England and America, who stand to lose all with the ever increasing demands by Japan on China.

"Made in Japan" is a bogy to all nations who deal in foreign markets. As to her unscrupulous practices in the trade of the world, they are blown away by Mr. Tiltman when he compares the difference in living between Asia and the rest of the world. One of the highlights of this book appears through Japan's number one spokesman for the Empire. His answers to questions by the author are illuminating, not so much in what they say as in what is left out, and in the light of what is happening today. Then there is the chance to refresh one's mind on the February incident in Tokyo and the reaction it had on the public described by one who witnessed it and can write about it more fully now than when it was news.

To appreciate the impetuousness of the Japanese army one has only to read the most important section in the Japanese constitution. It is the "Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors." The Manchurian affair and Russian border incidents take up the chapters "Strategy à la Nippon," "A Lesson in Lunacy," and "Manchukuo the Orphan State."

That China is trying to shake off the legacy of her years is clear to all who have followed oriental developments

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during the last few years, and for those who have not, Mr. Tiltman ably summarizes the gains under Chiang Kai-shek. How well he has foretold "North China Goes West" may be seen in the Japanese campaign of the hour. The way General Doihara, called the Lawrence of Asia, planned for quiet penetration is given full credit for enabling the Japanese to do what they are doing today. In bringing his book to a close the viewpoints of America and England are discussed at length, and the problem of the independence of the Philippines is given its due airing.

P. H. WILLIAMS.

Hope

American Dream, by Michael Foster. New York: William Morrow and Company. $3.00.

ALTHOUGH the title might imply it, Mr. Foster's book is not truly a thesis novel. An "American Dream" is an intangible and neither Mr. Foster nor his characters succeed in any explicit definition: it may lie in that subconscious but powerful urge for betterment of material welfare or untrammeled life in freedom from an old civilization's restrictions (a life more concerned with the spirit than the body) or it may be that the "American Dream" was not a thing of any one nation but of all. At least the preservation of such a dream is charted in the book's conclusion: "The only immediate hope—if there is any immediate hope for better things—lies with the quiet, decent people that you and I never hear of, because they are busy keeping things going. . . . It's the quiet 10 percent of the people. The silent 10 percent. Whose names are not often on page one, because they are so busy, and who pay very little attention to the loud antics of the shouters and grabbers." Considering the novel as narrative, it is just as well that Mr. Foster gave little attention to the development of a thesis. And yet the latter must be the first point of departure for a critical appraisal. Here it should inform the entire work: it does not, and Mr. Foster might easily be as much at sea as the reader in pointing out how his particular characters, making up an eccentric family tree, merit the task he assigns them.

The novel, nevertheless, is an intensely interesting one. Mr. Foster is a master of narrative which is inclined to the episodic. In the latter field no more satisfying passage in recent fiction can be found than the scene between Mary Thrall and the man she married in the belief that her husband was dead. Added to this is an unusually vivid power of description: the atmosphere of places and times is quickly captured with almost imperceptible deftness. The achievement is all the more startling for the characters themselves lack the proper dimension. They are largely too inarticulate and most frequently their actions come about through manipulation—things happen on unexplained impulse and without proper motivation, even the motivation of impulses. Here, then, is another indication that "American Dream" deserves to be more profound. If profundity, however, is not expected the novel will be found unusual reading.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

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Briefer Mention

Headlining America; edited by Frank Luther Mott and Cooperating Editors. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.00. America's reportorial powers in 1935 and 1936 are here represented by over 100 news articles chosen as the best in their fields. To Paul O'Neil of the Seattle *Times,* for "Bear Attends Circus," goes the humorous award. "Death in Dark Swamp," by John F. Wells, *Arkansas Gazette,* is the best description of disaster, and for making something out of nothing Fred Hunt, Quincy *Patriot-Leader,* takes the prize.

The Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield. Edited by J. Middleton Murry. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50. Bound together in a volume which is a fitting tribute are the eighty-eight short stories of one considered a past master in the art of using words in their simplest meanings to express a thought. The introduction by her husband gives an exceptionally clear picture of her struggle to be accepted, which was successful only three years before her death, that ended the career of one of the greatest English writers of the present century.

Spy Overhead, by Clinch Calkins. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50. Before the United States Senate the story of commercial espionage has been unraveled into a true detective story whose basic points are here given and examined. The American industrial workers who were caught in the different industrial spy traps herein have their day in court, and truly it is an appalling story.

Britain in Europe, by R. W. Seton-Watson. New York: The Macmillan Company. $9.00. A masterly survey of British foreign policy from Castlereagh to Salisbury, with a brief prologue and an epilogue that concludes with Grey's conviction that British mediation could alone avert a major conflict in 1914. Britain is of Europe, yet not of it. Hence she has preferred isolation but practised collaboration with world powers.

Housing Officials' Yearbook, 1937, edited by Coleman Woodbury. Chicago: National Association of Housing Officials. Third of the annual round-up published by N.A.H.O., this yearbook is a most valuable handbook on the state of the country's housing and planning and on the condition of the local and central agencies and the profession which deal most directly with an immense and interesting public problem.

CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI, executive secretary of the Catholic Poetry Society of America and editor of *Spirit,* is the author of "The Mysteries of the Rosary."

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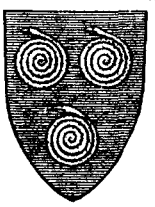

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